

Hans Schneider, 1927–2014

Richard A. Brualdi



Hans Schneider, the James Joseph Sylvester Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, died on Tuesday, October 28, 2014. He was eighty-seven. In the field of linear algebra he was one of the most influential mathematicians of the twentieth century.

Hans was born in Vienna, Austria, on January 27, 1927, as the only child of two dentists, Hugo and Isabella (Saphir) Schneider. The family fled the Nazi occupation in March of 1938, traveling through Czechoslovakia and Poland before the eleven-year-old Hans gained admission to a Quaker boarding school in Holland. Hans was reunited with his family in Edinburgh in 1939 just three weeks before the outbreak of war. In 1952 he obtained a PhD from Edinburgh University under A. C. Aitken. He was an assistant lecturer at Queen's University in Belfast before emigrating in 1959 to the USA with an assistant professorship at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. He was the department chair from 1966 to 1968. He held visiting positions at several universities, including the Technion in Israel, the Technical University of Munich, and the University of Birmingham (UK).

Hans took over as editor-in-chief of the journal *Linear Algebra and its Applications* in 1972

and remained as one of the editors in chief until 2012. This commercial journal afforded him the opportunity to redress the neglect of the field of linear algebra in the mathematical community. The field is now flourishing, with several journals devoted to it and its applications.

In 1987, Hans, with some colleagues, established the International Matrix Group, which was incorporated three years later as the International Linear Algebra Society (ILAS). In order to give the society permanence, a formal structure with annual elections was established. He served as its first president from 1990 to 1996. The society is now a substantial community with about four hundred members from more than twenty countries, publishing two journals, *IMAGE* and *The Electronic Journal of Linear Algebra*. In 1993 when Hans retired from the University of Wisconsin—Madison, ILAS established the Hans Schneider Prize in Linear Algebra.

Hans is the author of more than one hundred sixty papers on a wide range of topics in linear algebra and matrix theory, including two papers published in 2014. His favorite topic was the many ramifications and generalizations of the Perron—Frobenius theory of nonnegative matrices. He had seventeen PhD students and about eighty collaborators. He is survived by his wife, Miriam (Wieck), three children, and six grandchildren. (Portions excerpted from “Last Words” and “A Personal History”, available at www.math.wisc.edu/~hans.)

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1090/noti1296>